

## MINIATURE TOY GAMING EQUIPMENT

### CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application serial number 10/189,354 entitled "Castle Blocks Board Game" filed July 3, 2002, now U.S. Patent Number 6,659,463 entitled "Interconnecting Miniature Toy Figurine Bases", which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/479,531 filed Jan. 7, 2000 entitled "Castle Blocks Board Game" which claims the benefit of U.S. provisional patent application Serial No. 60/115,162, filed Jan. 8, 1999, entitled "Castle Blocks Board Game". These applications are incorporated herein by reference in the entirety and are referred to below as the '354 application, the '531 application and the '162 application, respectively.

### Background of the Invention

#### [0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to games and, more particularly, to miniature toy gaming.

#### [0004] 2. Background Information

[0005] Board games challenge the mind and teach players various skills and concepts, such as formulating strategies, sharing, socializing, competing, winning, and losing. Board games represent a class of activities that encourage cognitive mental development by challenging player's minds, as opposed to their bodies.

[0006] A common drawback of most board games, however, is that the format of the game is so structured that a player's imagination is constrained. For example, many commercially produced board games must be played on pre-printed boards, with game pieces traveling on a never-changing pathway. Many board games also incorporate instruction cards that order a player to move their game piece, lose a turn, or execute

some other command. As these games are played repeatedly, the game becomes more predictable, less challenging, and less appealing to play. Another disadvantage of many commercial board games is that the method of play is so random that original, independent thought does not help the player achieve the explicit goal of the game. Moreover, these games are essentially two-dimensional, with no requirement to estimate distances, evaluate how objects are constructed, or recognize objects.

[0007] In addition to the board games described above, miniature war gaming has developed a significant following. In miniature war gaming, participants use a collection of toy miniatures to play a given scenario. The miniatures may be, for example, historical representations (e.g. Napoleonic era soldiers), fantasy figures (e.g. elves, wizards, dragons, etc.) or science fiction characters. The game play of these often elaborate representations is hindered through piece movement limitations and inability to recognize objects and attributes.

[0008] It is therefore an object of the present invention to improve the game play of miniature toy gaming and to provide equipment that allows for interactive, educational games that encourages input from the players and allows the players to make their own decisions, choose their own strategies, and directly affect the outcome of the game.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] Obviating the drawbacks of the prior art, the present invention is directed toward a gaming system comprising a base for receiving a miniature figurine having distinct characteristics. The base may include at least one attachment member for interconnecting the base with an adjacent base. The gaming system may include a tracking member on each base for recording changing characteristics of the associated figurine.

[0010] The present invention further provides a method of playing a game comprising the steps of: (a) building a structure using structural units and may have at least one

structural unit guide; (b) assembling game pieces in proximity to the structure; (c) determining range values for each game piece using a movement measurement device; (d) moving each game piece within a permissible movement range value; (e) engaging in mathematical combat with game pieces controlled by an opposing side; and (f) removing captured game pieces from play.

[0011] The present invention further provides a movement measurement device for a game having distinct game pieces constructed to measure range values of said games pieces and may include an attaching member for connecting to the game pieces. The movement measurement device may be a housing with a measuring wheel having body indicia positioned thereon. The structural unit guides for building a structure according to the present invention are positioned adjacent said structural unit guides. The structural unit guide for building a structure are combined with other structural unit guides to aid in building a complete structure with each guide preferably received in grooves formed in the structural members. The grooved structural members help hide the guides and interlock the structural members.

[0012] These and other advantages of the present invention will be clarified in the Brief Description of the Preferred Embodiments taken together with the attached drawings in which like reference numerals represent like elements throughout.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] Fig. 1 is a top schematic view of a game piece representing a character of the game according to the present invention being moved to various positions via linear and non-linear paths;

[0014] Fig. 2 is a top schematic view showing the range of a game piece according to the present invention which is capable of launching imaginary projectiles and game pieces within the range;

[0015] Fig. 3 is a top schematic view showing a game piece of one group in a game according to the present invention (e.g. representing a Bloktroop character) in physical contact for simulated combat with a game piece of another group (e.g. representing a Badblok character);

[0016] Fig. 4 is a top schematic view showing a game piece representing an independent war apparatus (e.g. Blokapult the Catapult) within range of a structural unit;

[0017] Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a game piece in the form of a base and toy miniature according to the present invention;

[0018] Fig. 6a is a plan view of a game piece miniature base according to the present invention;

[0019] Fig. 6b is a perspective view of a height adjustment system for the game piece having a base as shown in Fig. 6a according to the present invention;

[0020] Fig. 7 is a perspective view of an assembly of game piece bases according to the present invention;

[0021] Fig. 8 is a bottom perspective view of a movable counter, such as a movement measurement device, according to one embodiment of the present invention;

[0022] Fig. 9 is a top perspective view of the movable counter shown in Fig. 8;

[0023] Fig. 10 is a perspective view of a moveable counter and integral game piece according to the present invention;

[0024] Fig. 11 is a perspective view of a moveable counter and integral game piece in the form of a figurine according to the present invention;

[0025] Fig. 12 is a top view of a movable counter according to another embodiment of the present invention having a rotating sphere and support shafts;

[0026] Fig. 13 is a side view of a movable counter according to another embodiment of the present invention with two rotating spheres;

[0027] Fig. 14 is a side view of a movable counter according to another embodiment of the present invention with two geared wheels;

[0028] Fig. 15 is a plan view of an assembly of bases such as shown in FIG. 7 with an associated moveable counter, which may be a movement measuring device, according to the present invention;

[0029] Fig. 16a is a side view of another embodiment of a movable counter according to the present invention;

[0030] Fig. 16b is a top view of the moveable counter shown in Fig. 16a;

[0031] Fig. 17a is a side view of another embodiment of a movable counter according to the present invention;

[0032] Fig. 17b is a top view of the moveable counter shown in Fig. 17a;

[0033] Fig. 18 is a perspective view of one possible castle structure constructed using structural units and structural unit guides according to the present invention;

[0034] Fig. 19 is a perspective view of one possible tower structure constructed using structural units and structural unit guides according to the present invention;

[0035] Fig. 20 is a perspective view of one possible castle structure constructed using structural units and structural unit guides according to the present invention;

[0036] Fig. 21 is a perspective view of the partially assembled castle structure of FIG. 20 constructed using structural units and structural unit guides according to the present invention with a perspective view of an interlocking structural unit according to the present invention;

[0037] Fig. 22 is a top view of a structural unit guide according to the present invention that is partially filled or completed with associated structural units; and

[0038] Fig. 23 is a top view of a structural unit guide according to the present invention of the type shown in Fig. 21.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0038] Fig. 1 is a top schematic view of a game piece 10 representing a specific character, "Queen Buildablok", of the game according to the present invention. The storyline of the game of the invention is disclosed in detail in the '162 application which is incorporated herein by reference. The game pieces 10 may be comprised of common geometric shapes and may also form structural units 16 (e.g. building blocks) as will be described hereinafter. The game piece 10 can also have decorative indicia, such as a picture of the character, or other visual pictures or symbols attached thereto for aesthetic purposes. Game piece indicia 12 is attached to each game piece 10 indicating the maximum attack value, the maximum movement value, the maximum attack range, if applicable and the classification (i.e. character or object name and/or group affiliation) of each individual game piece 10. Additionally the specific values include visible identifying indicia. For example, game pieces 10 having the game piece indicia 12 of "AT 4/MV 3/RA 10" have a maximum attack value of four with "AT" identifying the attack value, a maximum movement value of three with "MV" identifying the move value, and a maximum attack range of ten with "RA" identifying the range value. Game pieces 10 with an "A" classification may be identical in appearance to other game pieces 10 with an "A" classification. The following value chart illustrates the types of game

pieces 10 as well as the corresponding maximum attack, maximum movement, maximum range, and classification values positioned on each respective game piece 10 according to a game of the present invention:

Character	Game Characteristics	
	(Attack/Move/Range (if available)/Classification (if applicable))	
King Buildablok	AT 10/MV 10	(C)
Queen Buildablok	AT 8/MV 8/RA 8	(C)
Bloknight	AT 5/MV 5	(A)
Blokarcher	AT 4/MV 3/RA 10	(B)
Dragon Blaze Crunchablok	AT 10/MV 6/RA 6*	(C)
	*(attacks by breathing imaginary fire)	
Blokgoblin	AT 5/MV 5	(A)
Boogablok	AT 4/MV 3/RA 10	(B)
Blokapult the Catapult	AT 7/MV 3/RA 18*	
Attacks structures formed by structural units 16		

[0039] Although geometrically shaped game pieces 10 have a manufacturing advantage since the game pieces 10 and structural units 16 can both be manufactured using the same mold or template, thereby reducing manufacturing costs, other more sophisticated game pieces 10 may also be used. For example, human figurines, physical objects, animal figures, or any other two or three—dimensional objects can be used in part or in whole for the game pieces 10. The game pieces 10 can have movable body members on a figurine as well. Representations of humans, physical objects, animal figures and the like are collectively, interchangeably referred to as “figurines”, “miniatures”, and “miniature figurines” in the art.

[0040] As shown in Fig. 1, each game piece 14 can be moved in any direction, up to the maximum movement value indicated on the game piece 10 through the indicia 12 indicating movement range. In Fig. 1, the maximum movement value for the game piece 10 representing the character Queen Buildablok is eight (8) spaces with both the character and the movement being represented on the game piece 10 by the indicia 12. The maximum possible movement is illustrated as distance D in Fig. 1. Game pieces 10

cannot move through solid objects such as other game pieces 14, or structural pieces formed by structural units 16, such as those forming structures known as Sir Archway's Tower and Buildablok Castle in the game, so game pieces 10 must go around any obstructions. Intentional contact between game pieces 10 is used for the purpose of engaging in mathematical combat between the opposing contacting game pieces 10. A game piece 10 can, however, move through holes in representative structures, such as created by other aspects of the game (i.e. use of a war apparatus such as the Blokapult the Catapult), or through pre-existing holes, or through natural entranceways such as bridges.

[0041] Mathematical or simulated combat may occur through contacting game pieces 10 as shown in Fig. 3 in which a game piece 10, representing a Bloktroop character, is in physical contact for simulated combat with a game piece 10, representing a Badblok character. Alternatively, when an opposing game piece 10 is within the range R of a game piece 10 capable of launching imaginary projectiles, the two game pieces 10 also engage in mathematical combat as generally represented in Fig. 2. Further, simulated or mathematical combat may be between an independent war apparatus (e.g. Blokapult the Catapult game piece 10) and a structure formed by structural units 16 as represented in Fig. 4. Other simulated or mathematical combat possibilities are possible, such as multiple characters opposing a single character, characters capturing a war apparatus, and the like, as generally known in the war gaming art. The mathematical combat resolution may be through the combined use of a randomizing element, such as dice, together with the specific characteristics of the engaged game pieces (e.g. the attack values), the operation of one such example of combat resolution is described in detail in the '162 application and, in general, is of a type that is well known in the war gaming art. Another simplified combat resolution technique according to the present invention is to have classifications that beat other classifications (i.e. and "A" classification beats a "B" classification which beats a "C" classification which beats and "A" classification). The classifications may be assigned to the characters via the indicia 12 on the game pieces 10 as described above, or may be assigned through use of a moveable counter 20 which will be described below in detail. Again the details of the above types of combat resolution are described in the '162 application as well as the '354 application and the '531



application which are incorporated herein by reference. It is the indicia 12 on the game piece 10 which assists the game players in the present invention in most of the combat resolution types described above.

[0042] The game piece 10 formed of a miniature character figurine 22 mounted on a sub-base, or base 24, through a base cover or pedestal 26 of the base 24 is shown in Fig. 5. The structure of the game piece 10 of Fig. 5 represents a significant improvement for miniature game play. The base 24 is adapted to receive a figurine 22 such as illustrated in Fig. 5. The base 24 includes holes 28 for receipt of corresponding posts 32 in the figurine base 30 of the associated figurine 22 (without pedestal 26). Additionally the base 24 accommodates one or more height adjusting pedestals 26 as shown in Figs. 5 and 6b. The selectively stackable pedestals 26 will allow for figurines 22 to be mounted at varying heights relative to a play surface and, therefore, could be used for flying characters such as dragons, planes, blimps, spacecraft, etc. One advantage of the pedestals 26 over existing figurine bases 30 is that the pedestals 26 may be added or removed to quickly accommodate altitude changes. It is expected that in the game rules for any particular game, the pedestals 26 would be associated with a movement unit for the game piece 10 such that adding or removing a pedestal 26 will "use up" a portion of the game pieces movement value, that may be displayed on the game piece 10 through indicia 12 as noted above.

[0043] An additional attachment mechanism, other than holes 28, is incorporated into the base 24. A raised edge 36 may be sized to engage selected figurine bases 30 for given figurines 22. The base 24 is designed to fit figurines 22 from a variety of manufacturers to make the base 24 more universal.

[0044] In addition to the height varying characteristics for a figurine 22, the game piece 10 having a base 24 provides for a record tracking system for the associated miniature figurine 22. The base 24 include three slides 40 with associated indicia 42 that allows the base 24 to track relevant, possibly variable, characteristics of the associated game piece 10. For example, a game piece 10 may have a limited amount of health, ammo, or other

changing parameters, which the base 10 can track. During game-play the slides 40 can be adjusted and referred to as needed to assist in game play. The uses of the slides 40 is limitless and based upon the given play scenario and game playing rules. The object is to allow the association of these characteristics represented by the slide 40 of the miniature 22 to be associated with the game piece 10.

[0045] A further aspect of the base 24 is the provision of mating structure 44 in the form of an alternating dovetail connection on the edge to allow for the interconnection of adjacent bases 24 as shown in Figs. 7 and 15. This interconnection allows for associations of game pieces 10, e.g. troop formations such as skirmish lines, squads and the like, to be grouped as a unit. This interconnection will greatly facilitate game-play by allowing the grouped unit of game pieces 10, e.g. a squad of soldiers, to be moved as a single unit. Additionally it is helpful that the mating structure 44 be attachable and removable in a vertical movement of the associated bases 24. Further the alternating dovetail design on each edge of the mating structure 44 allows the bases 24 to be reversible to attach at  $\frac{1}{2}$  base increments (i.e. staggered). In addition to allowing for the formation of interconnected groups of characters or miniatures 22, the bases 24 can be combined to receive a larger figurine. For example, in certain figurine sets, two bases 24 may be connected to accommodate a larger figurine such as a horse riding character, or catapult or the like.

[0046] Fig. 8 and 9 are perspective views of a movable counter 20, such as a movement measurement device, according to one embodiment of the present invention. The movable counter 20 is a distance counter and includes a counter body 50 and a rotating counter wheel 52. The movable counter 20 may be a separate piece, with respect to the game pieces 10, but may also be incorporated into each game piece 10 as represented in Figs. 10 and 11. The counter body 50 and counter wheel 52 may be formed from wood or other suitable materials. The body 50 is shown as a generally rectangular shaped hollow box, with an open end and a window end positioned directly opposite the open end. The rotating counter wheel 52 includes a circumferential wheel face having wheel indicia 54 positioned thereon. The wheel indicia 54 may includes pictures, letters,

numbers, instructions, or other symbols or text. The counter wheel 52 is positioned with the wheel indicia 54 visible through the window end of the counter body 50 and the open end of the counter body 50. One rotation of the counter wheel 52 may be set to be the equivalent of one space. Other additions are contemplated, for example visual or sound effects may be added to the movable counter 20 associated with movement of the counter wheel 52 during or at the conclusion of movement, or any other combination

[0047] The moveable counter 20 may be used as a movement measurement device, i.e. a distance measuring wheel, for the players to count or measure moves of game pieces 10. The details of player movement of game pieces 10 in the game according to the invention is described in greater detail in the '162 application. The movable counter 20 affords the players tremendous flexibility because any distances associated with game play can be measured in a generally linear direction, in a generally curved direction, or in any combination of directions. Consequently a key feature of the moveable counter 20, when used as a movement measurement device, it easily allows for linear and non-linear measurements of the game pieces 10 as represented in Fig. 1.

[0048] In another embodiment of the movable counter 20, the movable counter 20 has a the counter wheel 52 with the wheel indicia 54 is coupled to a ground engaging wheel 56, such as by a gear belt or meshing gears as shown in Fig. 14. In operation, the ground engaging wheel 56 contacts the table, ground, or other playing surface, and due to the gearing ratio, the rate of turn of the wheel indicia 54 positioned on the circumference of the counter wheel 52 can be adequately controlled for measurement, rather than counting complete revolutions of the counter wheel 52.

[0049] In another embodiment of the movable counter 20 as shown in Fig. 12, the movable counter 20 may also replace the counter wheel 52 with a counter sphere 62 having evenly spaced sphere indicia 64 visible on an outer surface of the counter sphere 62. The counter sphere 62 is housed within the body 50 which may be integral with a game piece 10 as discussed above. The counter sphere 52 rides on shafts, or ball bearings, with the shafts having rotating sleeves. A removable bottom plate may be

attached to the body 50 having an opening so that the sphere 52 can contact the playing surface and still be contained in the game piece 10 or body 50. The sphere indicia 64 is visible to a player through an opening in the body 50 and may be formed with a clear window, preferably plastic, with a center indicator. Each sphere indicia 64 passing through the opening during operation may count as one space. In another embodiment, as shown in Fig. 13, the movable counter 20 can also include the counter sphere 62 driven by a ground engaging sphere 66.

[0050] Another embodiment of the moveable counter 20, also called a movement measurement device, is shown in Fig. 15 attached to bases 24 according to the present invention. The moveable counter 20 has the measuring counter wheel 52 with wheel indicia 54 in a similar manner to the moveable counters 20 discussed above, wherein the wheel indicia 54 may include movement indication on one side and other game related information on the other side, such as combat resolution information. As shown in Fig. 15, the moveable counter 20 includes mating structure 84 which allows for easy connection to a single base 24 or a group of inter-connected bases 24. The moveable counter 20 may include a cover partially covering the counter wheel 52, also called a drum, with the cover providing a further surface for mounting an associated figurine 22, or other mounting. For example, the cover may provide an appropriate position for a field general or king figurine 22 as well as battle flags or other command structure associated with the overall game scenario.

[0051] Figs. 16a and 16b show a further modification of the moveable counter 20, also called a movement measurement device, which measures range values R in three dimensions. This modification generally includes a base or counter body 50 further having at least one retractable measurement line 70 positioned adjacent an origin 72, base or body indicia 74, and a first semi-circular member 76 positioned adjacent the counter body 50. The counter body 50 rotates 360° about a longitudinal axis L, the first semi-circular member 76 has member indicia 78 positioned thereon, and the retractable measurement line 70 is extendable and retractable with respect to the counter body 50, as

shown by the arrows. Each measurement line 70 may be retracted with a corresponding hand crank attached to a retractor pulley or other suitable mechanism.

[0052] In operation, one or more retractable measurement lines 70 having measurement line indicia 80 are pulled from the counter body 50 and aligned with the body indicia 74 and/or the member indicia 78. The direction and length of the retractable measurement line or lines 70, measured from the origin 72 using the measurement line indicia 80 indicates range R.

[0052] Figs. 17a and 17b show a further modification of the moveable counter 20, or movement measurement device, that can also measures range value R in three dimensions. This modification generally includes a counter body 50 having at least one retractable measurement line 70 positioned adjacent an origin 72 and a first semi-circular member 76 positioned adjacent the counter body 50. It further includes a second semi-circular member 90 positioned adjacent the first semi-circular member 76, wherein the first and second semi-circular members 76 and 90 are movable with respect to the counter body 50 and each other. The first semi-circular member 76 has member indicia 78 positioned thereon and the retractable measurement lines 70 are extendable and retractable with respect to the counter body 50.

[0053] Each semi-circular member 76 and 90 are movably attached to the counter body 50 by pins, with an arc of the first semi-circular member 76 circumscribed by an arc of the second semi-circular member 90. This configuration allows the first and second semi-circular members 76 and 90 to move 180° in first and second directions with respect to the counter body 50, as indicated by the arrows. The second semi-circular member 90 may have protrusions 92 and member indicia 94. The second semi-circular member 90 may also have snub-nosed movement pointers 96 positioned thereon. The protrusions 92 help keep the two semi-circular members 76 and 90 together after being rotated about the pins.

[0054] In operation, the first and second semi-circular members 76 and 90 are pivoted about the counter body 50, or otherwise moved with respect to one another. A retractable measurement line 70 is pulled from the counter body 50 and aligned directly adjacent the intersection of the first and second semi-circular members 76 and 90, optionally guided by a movement pointer 96. The direction and length of the retractable measurement line 70, measured from the origin 72 indicates the range value R.

[0055] The moveable counter 20 permits range value measurements on the playing surface and in three dimensions, such as measuring between a game piece 10 on a first level of a structure and a game piece 10 positioned adjacent a higher level of the structure. The moveable counter 20 can also be used for measuring between ground level and flying objects in a game, such as blimps, airplanes, or rockets. Moreover, although any of the moveable counters 20 discussed above may be separate pieces, any of these may also be incorporated into one or more game pieces 10 as discussed above. The combining of the moveable counter 20 directly with a game piece 10 having a figurine 22 may have particular advantage in games for younger children who will not have to separately measure game piece movement (e.g. the movement of the integrated game piece 10 and moveable counter 20 will occur simultaneously with measurement of the move through the integral moveable counter 20).

[0056] Fig. 18 is a perspective view of one possible castle structure constructed using structural units 16 and structural unit guides 100 according to the present invention; Fig. 19 is a perspective view of one possible tower structure constructed using structural units 16 and structural unit guides 100 according to the present invention; and Fig. 20 is a perspective view of another possible castle structure constructed using structural units 16 and structural unit guides 100 according to the present invention.

[0057] The structural units 16 may be made from wood or other suitable materials can be used. Moreover, the structured units 16 can also have decorative indicia, such as brick facade or another pattern, attached thereto for aesthetic purposes. The structural units 16 each generally take the shape of a basic geometric objects with rectangular sides,

triangular sides, arcs, arches, wedged shaped units, cubes, equilateral triangles, or trapezoids in plan view, as generally known in the art of wooden toy building blocks. Attached to each structural unit 16 of similar type is structural unit indicia 98.

[0058] The game according to the present invention uses the structural units 16 to build a variety of structures using the structural unit guides 100. The storyline associated with the specifics of the game and the rules of the play of the game are discussed in detail in the '162 application which is incorporated. The same structural units 16 are used to build each of the structures shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The building of each structure is an important portion of the game and each structure is incorporated into the scenario played out. Partially tearing down of the structures during play of each scenario is also part of the game play. Again the details of the game play are set forth in the '162 application incorporated herein by reference.

[0059] Fig. 21 is a perspective view of the partially assembled castle structure of FIG. 20 constructed using structural units 16 and structural unit guides 100 according to the present invention with a perspective view of an interlocking structural unit 16 according to the present invention. The interlocking structural unit 16 is a specialized grooved structural unit 16, also called an interlocking block. The interlocking block includes a groove formed in opposed sides of the block. The groove serves to receive the template or structural unit guide 100 for the subsequent layer therein, which will essentially hide or at least minimize the appearance of the guide 100 in the finished structure. Further the groove in the interlocking block will receive structural units 16 of adjacent layers therein to interlock the layers to provide a more secure structure. The grooved interlocking block may take a straight H or I beam shape, or include corners as shown in the attached figures. Curved shapes for the interlocking blocks are also possible. Further it is envisioned that an interlocking block may have a pivot between two ends along a 45 degree bevel such that the block can be pivoted to a straight or a degree corner block.

[0060] Fig. 22 is a top view of a structural unit guide 100 according to the present invention that is partially filled or completed with associated structural units 16. Fig. 23

is a top view of a structural unit guide 100 according to the present invention of the type shown in Fig. 21. The structural unit guides 100 of the present invention are generally flat sheets of cardboard or other suitable material, with each structural unit guide 100 having structural unit guide indicia 102 on either side thereof. The structural unit guide indicia 102 includes alphabetical letters, dots, or shadow outlines of various structural units 16, with the shadow outlines forming available spaces. The purpose of the structural unit guides 100 and the structural unit guide indicia 102 is to provide a visual blueprint to players, that when used in conjunction with corresponding structural unit indicia 98 positioned on the structural units 16, aids in the construction of the structures known as Sir Archway's Tower and Buildablok Castle shown in Figures 19 and 20. Other structural unit indicia 98 or structural unit guide indicia 102 may be used to accomplish this purpose. Further, certain areas of the guide 100 can be printed with indicia or background to help it blend into the finished structure (e.g. a cobble stone printing).

[0061] As discussed above a structure, such as Sir Archway's Tower has multiple layers, e.g. thirteen layers, of structural units 16, with each layer stacked upon a portion of the preceding layers. To aid in construction of the structure the structural unit guides 100 can be used. However, any freestanding or other structure may be built with or without the use of structural unit guides 100. A structural unit guide 100 corresponds to each level of a structure, such as Sir Archway's Tower. The structural unit guide indicia 102 positioned on the structural unit guide 18 define the location of specific types of structural units 16. For example, a structural unit 16 having a structural unit indicia 98 "A" positioned adjacent thereto is positioned over a corresponding available space 110 on the structural unit guide 100 also having the structural unit guide indicia 102 "A". In cases where the structural units 16 are preferred to have a given orientation, a dot or other structural unit indicia 98 is positioned on the structural unit 16 and a corresponding dot or other structural unit guide indicia 102 is positioned on the structural unit guide 100. The dots are then positioned directly opposite each other during construction. This process is repeated until the available spaces on the structural unit guide 100 are filled, forming a given layer of structural units 16. A structural unit guide 100 corresponding to the next



level of the structure is then placed over the previous layer of structural units 16, and the process is repeated until the structure is completed. While use of the structural unit guides 100 is suggested, the structural unit guides 100 can be supplanted by the creativity and imagination of the players, and any other structures can be built without using the structural unit guides.

[0062] The basic, storyline, structure, game characters, and battle resolution rules can be easily modified with the elements of the present invention. The above described building block and miniature toy gaming equipment can be utilized in a wide variety of games, including the detailed game as described in the related applications. A further example of the application of the equipment of the present invention is a cave-man role playing game developed by the inventor. The game utilizes at least one male and female figurine 22 representing a single clan for each player. The object of the game is for each player to have his clan collect the appropriate material needed to produce fire and/or a wheel. Each figurine 22 includes a moveable counter 20, also called a movement measurement device, integral with the figurine 22. Additionally, the counter wheel 52 has one side of the wheel with indicia alternating between "rock", "paper", and "scissors". When two opposing figurines 22 approach the same element (e.g. a part of a wheel axle) in the same turn the players engage in a combat whose outcome is based upon the display of the two paper--rock--scissors on each figurines moveable counter 20 (for sake of completeness: paper defeats rock, rock defeats scissors and scissors defeats paper). The winner is awarded the element and the loser is frozen until touched by a female figurine 22 of the clan. Further specifics of the game are not relevant here. The game is not limited to a pre-printed board layout but allows easy calculation of the piece movement during game play. Further the rules combine the well known concepts of freeze tag and paper-rock-scissors in the game play. This is only one representation of the many games possible with the equipment of the present invention. The template (e.g. the guides 100) used in building the illustrated structures can also be modified so that the players can build any desired structure (e.g. templates can be designed to replicate the Eiffel tower, The White House, etc). The templates can be utilized with essentially any block building set such as those sold under the trademark LEGO®. The easily connected and

disconnected bases 24 are universal as described. Consequently the present invention is believed to open up the area of game design and improve game play in specific areas.

[0063] The invention has therefore been described with reference to the preferred embodiments. Obvious modifications and alterations will occur to others upon reading and understanding the preceding detailed description. It is intended that the invention be construed as including all such modifications and alterations insofar as they come within the scope of the appended claims or the equivalents thereof.